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Report of the World Tourism Organization on the development of tourism statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-fourth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the World Tourism Organization on the development of tourism statistics. The Commission is requested to comment on the progress in tourism statistics.

* E/CN.3/2004/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 4* (E/2003/24), chap. I.A, para. 1.

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Report of the World Tourism Organization on the Development of Tourism Statistics

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I. Role of the World Tourism Organization in the field of tourism statistics

1. The specific role of the World Tourism Organization in the field of tourism statistics has been recognized officially at the international level, and has been formalized through the agreement between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization,[1] which in its article 13 establishes their respective roles and their interaction and collaboration. This role encompasses three major functions: the setting of standards, the promotion of the implementation of such standards, and the dissemination of tourism statistics collected through the World Tourism Organization. These functions are further discussed in section II of the present report.

2. It had been accepted that, from an economic point of view, tourism needed to be viewed from a demand perspective as a social phenomenon emerging from the activity of visitors. In order to measure the economic effects and impacts of this demand in a uniform way, over all activities and worldwide, it was necessary to develop a set of basic concepts, classifications and aggregates to make possible the identification of the phenomenon, and present it in a language that would be comparable with that used in other areas and uniform over different socio-geographical universes.

3. Tourism analysts have tended to develop their own conceptual frameworks, and a certain marginalization was observed in the past. The fact that much emphasis was given to the particularities of tourism made it impossible to study the phenomenon in terms of categories used for other economic activities.

4. As stated in article 13 of the agreement between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization, the World Tourism Organization has been recognized "as the appropriate organization to collect, to analyse, to publish, to standardize and to improve the statistics of tourism, and to promote the integration of these statistics within the sphere of the United Nations system". Such integration would be its specific responsibility and concern. The main endeavour of the World Tourism Organization has therefore been and in the future will continue to be: to consider the phenomenon, its actors and its effects in such a way as to enable a unique language to be used among all the stakeholders. This encompasses the design and development of a system of tourism statistics in such a way as to make its components (concepts, classifications and aggregates) compatible with other conceptual frameworks commonly used to describe other phenomena.

5. With respect to this concern, there was also the need to include the economic measurement of tourism within the mainstream of the measurement of economic activities, mainly the System of National Accounts, 1993 (1993 SNA).[2] This guided the World Tourism Organization towards the establishment of a recommended framework within which to develop a tourism satellite account that would be applicable in all countries in order to facilitate the comparison of tourism to other economic activities, and to make possible comparison among different countries.

6. Nevertheless, the setting of standards for statistical measurements is insufficient: if these are to be applied, the activity should be associated with concrete actions leading to the promotion of the implementation of these standards, such as the development of general guidelines on specific issues based on best practices or comparative research analysis, further documentation and deeper insight

into the concepts, definitions and classifications, seminars and workshops, technical assistance etc. A basic element in this process, although of a very different nature, is the inter-institutional cooperation of national tourism administrations with other governmental bodies such as national statistical offices, central banks, migration/interior authorities and private sector representatives.

7. Lastly, these actions should lead to an improvement of world statistics concerning tourism, disseminated through the World Tourism Organization, in terms of their effective content and comparability of methodologies, concepts and consequently measurements. Coverage of tourism statistics has long been limited to the collection of movements of travellers at international borders and global values of expenditure by foreign travellers in the economic territory and by national travellers abroad; a sharpening of the concepts and definitions of tourism, encompassing also the activities of resident visitors within their country of residence, the setting of standards and the promotion of their implementation would lead to improvements in the coverage, quality and comparability of the data disseminated through the World Tourism Organization and thus to their usefulness in, and relevance to, describing the phenomenon in all its dimensions.

II. Implementation of the main functions of the World Tourism Organization

A. Setting of standards

8. The preface to the 1978 publication entitled *Provisional Guidelines of Statistics of International Tourism*,[3] underlined its "provisional character" and stressed "the need for further work in this field ... on the basis of work by appropriate national authorities, by the World Tourism Organization and by various other regional and international organizations, including the United Nations".

9. On this basis, the World Tourism Organization has been a main actor in respect of the insertion of tourism statistics within the general statistical system. Over less than 10 years, two sets of recommendations were presented to the Statistical Commission:

(a) *Recommendations on Tourism Statistics*[4] (hereinafter referred to as REC93) whose recommendations and provisional classification[5] were adopted by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session in 1993.[6] These had the following basic characteristics:

(i) The purpose had been to develop a first set of basic elements of a system of tourism statistics in order to provide users with reliable, consistent and appropriate statistical information on the socio-economic structure and development of the tourism phenomenon;

(ii) In respect of its design, the system of tourism statistics was devised to ensure the international comparability of statistics in the field of tourism, viewed as an economic activity. Special care was taken to relate its definitions and concepts to those already in use in other domains of economic analysis;

(iii) In terms of its elements, the system of tourism statistics can be defined as a set of components, of a statistical nature, comprising the statistical sources

themselves (that is to say surveys, administrative records, or those of a synthetic nature like national accounts and balance of payments, etc.), the specific tools and instruments required at some stages of the process for the generation of statistics (classifications, databases etc.) and the data that result from these processes. As a consequence, the system of tourism statistics also encompasses the technical aspects of field operation, the creation of statistical infrastructure, the elaboration of the results, and the completion of the tasks leading to an integration of the data into a system of information;

(b) *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework*[7] (referred to hereinafter as REC00) which was adopted by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session in 2000,[8] with the following basic characteristics:

(i) Its purpose is to further the integration of tourism into the mainstream of economic measurement and analysis by establishing a strong relationship with the 1993 SNA and the fifth edition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) *Balance of Payments Manual*[9] frameworks. This major focus on the structural link to the 1993 SNA and the *Balance of Payments Manual* concepts led to some necessary adjustments in the definitions and concepts that had been proposed in REC93, and these adjustments were made explicit;

(ii) In respect of design, the tourism satellite account focuses on the relationship of tourism with the main concepts and aggregates of the 1993 SNA, so that *tourism value added* can be defined as a share of *total value added*, and so that the exchange of information between the systems, as well as the sharing of analysis and statistical procedures, may be facilitated;

(iii) In respect of elements, although formally included in its conceptual framework, some of the components of *tourism demand* (like *tourism gross fixed capital formation and tourism collective consumption*) have not been developed in the tourism satellite account official publication as consistently as *tourism consumption* (defined in relationship with the concept of *household effective consumption* of the 1993 SNA and established according to types of visitors and venue of consumption) which plays the role of the basic concept of the demand approach. Other relevant elements of the tourism satellite account are *tourism industries* (defined as those productive activities that produce a principal output that has been identified as characteristic of tourism), and tourism characteristics products, both being characterized in terms of specific lists[10] based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Rev.3,[11] and the Central Product Classification (CPC), Version 1.0.[12] Lastly, the impact of the activities of visitors on employment and the conditions of work of workers in tourism industries are also part of the tourism satellite account conceptual framework.

10. Pursuant to the above-mentioned 1978 provisional guidelines on international tourism statistics, the same process was followed in the setting up of REC93 and REC00 and consisted of:

- Methodological research and proposals for standards developed by different international organizations.
- Collection of country experiences.

- Organization of international conferences by the World Tourism Organization (Ottawa, 1991; Nice, France, 1999) where the basic elements of the future proposal of new international standards were presented and discussed.
- Setting up of an inter-institutional alliance involving both producers and users, national and international organizations, in order to structure a final version for submission to the Statistical Commission (Rec00).

11. These processes entailed a tremendous effort both financial and organizational. Table 1 describes the process that unfolded during the period from March 1994 to November 1999 in developing the tourism satellite account conceptual framework.

Table 1
Elements of the process of developing the tourism satellite account conceptual framework

Organization	*Work began (month/year)*	*Number of participating countries*[a]	*Number of meetings*[b,c]	*Tourism satellite account drafts prepared*
World Tourism Organization	March 1994	37[d]	8	6[e]
OECD	June 1994	29	11	6
Eurostat	October 1998	6	3	0[f]

[a] Average number of countries participating in the meetings.
[b] Up to end-1999.
[c] The three organizations (World Tourism Organization, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat)) have always been invited to each other's meetings.
[d] An average of nine organizations and five industry representatives also participated in World Tourism Organization meetings.
[e] Up to six experts cooperated with the World Tourism Organization over this period in the preparation of the six different drafts.
[f] Eurostat did not seek to develop a new alternative to the design of a tourism satellite account.

While the World Tourism Organization initiated and led these efforts to create a new standard relating to tourism satellite accounts, a new statistical instrument for measuring the economic importance of tourism, it should nevertheless be recognized that both the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in particular, through parallel initiatives, made many significant contributions.

B. Promotion of the implementation of standards

12. The World Tourism Organization has played a central role in promoting the implementation of standards by developing different types of materials (most of them accessible online at: http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_statistics.html) and providing technical assistance in terms both of country missions and of regional and subregional seminars and workshops. Also, it should be mentioned that Eurostat represents an outstanding example of an organization that undertook other international initiatives to promote the implementation of these

standards and, in particular, that some of them have been supported by legal acts of the European Parliament of the European Union (EU).

13. Pursuant to the approval of REC00, the World Tourism Organization made one of its main leitmotifs the promotion of the setting up of an inter-institutional alliance in all countries in order to improve their system of tourism statistics as a precondition for the development of a tourism satellite account. In the view of the World Tourism Organization, such an alliance should cover both producers and users comprising, besides the national tourism administration, the national statistical office, the central bank, migration authorities (or some equivalent body in the ministry of the interior) and tourism private sector representatives. within this group, the unit in charge of the compilation of national accounts would have a special role to play, not only in the provision of information, but also, owing to its great experience, in the reconciliation of conflicting sources of information, which underlies the construction of a tourism satellite account.

14. Because of the key role that national statistical offices play in the production of tourism statistics and owing to their competence in the development of national general statistical systems, the World Tourism Organization has cooperated with regional commissions' statistical departments in organizing regional seminars and workshops. As a consequence, not only is the presence increasingly evident of national statistics office officials (both those responsible for statistics production and those responsible for national accounts) as well as that of balance-of-payments compilers, but also there is greater awareness of the benefits resulting from a tourism satellite account for the compilation of national accounts (basically in terms of improved estimation of household final consumption expenditure by products, and future insight into some less well known activities and products, like travel agencies, package tours and time-sharing arrangements etc.), in addition to the strengthening of the leadership role of national statistical offices as custodians of the general statistical system.

15. The World Tourism Organization is aware of the difficulties faced by many countries in achieving such cooperation but at the same time it has observed that these struggles are necessary if countries are to develop tourism statistics and, eventually, the tourism satellite account.

16. From this perspective, the World Tourism Organization has developed an international cooperation framework that should facilitate the set-up and continuity of an inter-institutional alliance within the countries. The initiatives tackled include cooperation with:

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF), by promoting channels of collaboration in some countries between the central bank and the national tourism administration in finding ways to solve the major discrepancies in their respective estimations of the expenditure associated with non-resident visitors.
- The International Labour Organization (ILO), with regard to the opportunity to define general guidelines for including a "tourism module" in the household income/expenditure surveys as a way of promoting the international comparability of expenditure associated with domestic tourism.

These initiatives are complemented by active participation in two multilateral platforms that specifically enable cooperation in particular projects with other

organizations such as Eurostat, OECD, the United Nations Statistics Divisions and others, namely:

- The Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, as a reflection of the importance of tourism in international trade in services, whose specificity needs to be recognized and also requires special treatment.
- The Technical Subgroup of the Expert Group on Economic and Social Classifications, as classification issues are particularly important for the recognition of a tourism-specific set of activities and of commodities, and for the building of a tourism satellite account, in particular when confronting demand by visitors (consumption) and supply by resident producers.

Lastly, the World Tourism Organization is regularly invited by Eurostat and OECD to attend the meetings of their respective Working Groups on Tourism Statistics, participates in different initiatives explaining the links of the tourism satellite account with other macroeconomic frameworks such as the 1993 SNA and the fifth edition of the IMF *Balance of Payments Manual*, and promotes bilateral cooperation in relevant areas only partially covered in the present international standards of tourism statistics (for example, with OECD in the area of short-term tourism statistics and, with ILO in developing employment data in tourism industries).

17. Consistent with the objective of strengthening inter-institutional cooperation both at national and at international levels, the World Tourism Organization Committee on Statistics and Macroeconomic Analysis of Tourism is a key mechanism in the mission and programme of work of the World Tourism Organization in the field of statistics. It includes members and non-members of the World Tourism Organization, international organizations (like OECD, Eurostat and ILO) and relevant users of tourism statistics. It was established at the Enzo Paci World Conference on the Measurement of the Economic Impact of Tourism, held in Nice, France, in June 1999, and "conceived as an inter-institutional mechanism for the mutual interchange of methodological advice and the definition of the main lines of action concerning actual and future work on statistical instruments and economic research related to the conceptual framework for the preparation of the Tourism Satellite Account".

C. Securing international comparability of tourism statistics

18. International comparability is a long-term objective, which can be secured through two procedures that complement and reinforce each other: the standardization of concepts, classifications and methods of compilation, used among reporting countries; and the dissemination of information using a formalized, uniform standard. Based on its experience in disseminating worldwide tourism statistics, the World Tourism Organization considers that the present situation is far from satisfactory and requires special attention and initiatives such as:

- Special issue: cross-national compliance or harmonization studies of concepts and procedures (*usual environment* in domestic tourism statistics and others).
- Follow-up reviews.
- Notice and constructive advice when inconsistencies and non-compliance instances emerge or are discovered.

- Occasional audit reviews to assess compliance with international standards.
- In-depth case studies to assess issues of international harmonization and compliance.
- Publication of countries or organizations found in non-compliance, with significant variations from the established standards.

19. Table 2 (referring to the period 1999-2001) summarizes the availability to a number of countries of the basic set of indicators that support at present the international comparability of tourism activity.

20. Despite the short period of time that had elapsed between the development of the two sets of recommendations, a giant step was taken in the integration of tourism statistics in the general statistical system. However, there are still important limitations in the international comparability of the available data, mainly in respect of basic characteristics such as international arrivals and departures, expenditures associated with inbound and outbound tourism and, particularly, the corresponding travel flows in the case of domestic tourism for which there is still no comparative international data series.

21. A particularly significant case is that of the European Union (EU) and also, to a lesser extent, that of those countries that are candidates to join EU in 2004. It constitutes the only known example where a special effort has been made to harmonize the observation tools used to obtain a uniform set of data associated with the tourism activity of residents (indeed, a legal norm forces all countries to use the same definitions and classifications). However, important limitations still remain, in regard, for example, to the different operative approaches to the concept of *usual environment* by the different countries and the fact that no intra- or extra-EU-15 net flows of arrivals and departures have been published as yet (as is also the case for international transactions of goods and services).

Table 2
Availability of basic indicators of tourism activity, EU, OECD and the regional commissions, 1999-2001

(Number by countries)

	Total number of countries[a]	*EU*		*OECD*	*Regional commission*				
					ECLAC	*ESCWA*	*ECA*	*ECE*	*ESCAP*
Basic indicator (20)	*207*	*15 MS*	*10 CC*	*30 MS*	*35 MS + 7 AM*	*13 MS*	*52 MS*	*48 MS*	*43 MS + 9 AM*
Inbound tourism									
Arrivals									
Visitors	111	6	10	17	32	7	19	29	24
Tourists (overnight visitors)	184	14	10	26	40	12	43	46	43
Same-day visitors	91[b]	7	6	14	31	4	13	24	19
Arrivals by country of origin	193[c]	14	10	29	41	12	46	46	48
Arrivals by mode of transport	150	9	10	21	39	6	34	32	39
Arrivals by purpose of visit									
Leisure, recreation and holidays	134	7	6	15	32	6	30	25	41
Business and professional	128	7	6	15	32	5	29	25	37
Other purpose	123	7	5	15	29	6	28	23	37
Overnight stays and length of stay									
Overnight stays in H&S	116	14	10	24	19	10	23	43	21
Overnight stays in CE	73	14	10	25	12	2	14	39	6
ALS of non-resident tourists	103	8	9	17	26	8	16	27	26
Tourism expenditure in country of reference	176	15	10	30	40	11	42	44	39
Domestic tourism									
Overnight stay in H&S	85	14	9	26	9	5	17	40	14
Overnight stay in CE	51	14	9	25	4	1	7	36	3
Outbound tourism									
Departures	100	12	10	26	22	4	12	35	27
Tourism expenditure in other countries	148	15	10	30	35	7	33	42	31
Tourism activities									
Hotels and similar establishments									
Number of rooms	167	13	9	28	40	12	35	40	40
Number of bed places	139	12	10	22	25	11	32	42	29
Occupancy rate	149	14	10	29	28	9	35	44	33
Average length of stay (residents and non-residents)	101	7	10	18	21	3	20	34	23

Note: MS: Member State.
CC: Candidate countries.
AM: Associate members.
H&S: Hotels and similar establishments.
CE: All types of tourism accommodation establishments.
ALS: Average length of stay.
ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
ESCWA: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.
ECA: Economic Commission for Africa.
ECE: Economic Commission for Europe.
ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

[a] Only eight having the whole set of basic indicators.
[b] For 25 countries, referring to cruise passengers.
[c] For 88 countries, arrivals by country of nationality; for 96, by country of residence; and for 9, both by country of nationality and by country of residence.

22. In the last three years, the World Tourism Organization has carried out studies related both to the applicability of some elements of the conceptual framework of tourism statistics (like the *usual environment*, probably the fundamental concept that underlies the design of the system of tourism statistics[11]), and to the tools used to measure some of the basic variables (specifically, the analysis of data on arrivals and departures at national borders, and the analysis of surveys of tourism expenditure associated with inbound tourism).

23. Both studies were designed to evaluate the quality and comparability of the data obtained in a relevant number of countries and the final result stressed the need to undertake specific initiatives in order to achieve improvement in both areas.

24. Also, in a significant number of countries (about 40 have developed a tourism satellite account exercise or plan to develop one in 2004-2005, among which are countries as diverse as Canada, Costa Rica, France, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Spain and the United States of America), tourism satellite account development has revealed some challenges that had not been expected before this type of exercise was initiated, with regard to the credibility of a good part of the available tourism statistics, which have been (and still are) mainly associated with tourism demand. These challenges are very diverse but all correspond to the fundamental nature of tourism satellite account as a tool for the integration of scattered tourism data. They encompass:

- Lack of uniformity in the classifications and definitions used for the same variables in different sources (for example, accommodation).
- Confrontation between supply and demand with regard to which products are supplied by tourism industries to visitors, both residents and non-residents.
- New users' needs, with respect, for instance, to some characteristics of the trip and/or of the visitors themselves that are usually not included in the main statistical operations in the field of tourism (such as, organization of the trip, size of the travel group, identification of same-day visitors etc.).

III. Looking into the future: work programme of the World Tourism Organization for the period 2004-2006

A. Keeping relevant the conceptual framework of tourism statistics

25. Based on its experience in the development of tourism statistics, the World Tourism Organization considers that there is currently no need for fundamental or comprehensive changes to both sets of international standards approved by the Statistical Commission, as such changes would impede the process of implementation which in most countries is presently under way.

26. Additionally, REC00 undertook to provide an update of various concepts, definitions, aggregates and classifications that had been elaborated in REC93, owing mostly to the fact that the first set of recommendations had been developed before an awareness and appreciation of the linkage between statistics of macroeconomic aspects of tourism and the System of National Accounts were developed and communicated to a broad constituency of tourism statisticians and users; and

secondarily because the REC93 recommendations had been formulated before the 1993 SNA was itself finalized and approved. These updates refer to:

- Some changes in the scope of the concept of *visitor consumption* which, besides its component representing *visitor final consumption expenditure in cash* (always the major component of total consumption of or on behalf of visitors, which in REC93 was considered equivalent to *visitor consumption* or *tourism demand*) now also includes *tourism consumption expenditure in kind*, *tourism social transfers in kind* and *tourism business expenses*.
- New aggregates of interest regarding the measurement of the economic impacts of tourism, namely, *tourism collective consumption*, *tourism employment*, *tourism value added*, *tourism gross fixed capital formation* etc.
- Significant changes in the definition of some concepts (for instance, that of domestic tourism, which specifies that the concept refers to the tourism activity of resident visitors within the economic territory of the country of reference, specification of which was not part of the previous REC93 definition, which led to the exclusion altogether from domestic tourism consumption, of tourism expenditures by visitors leaving the country undertaken before departure or after their return within their country of residence).
- Change and development of classifications to be used in tourism statistics (for instance, the inclusion of lists of tourism characteristic products and activities, based respectively on CPC, Version 1.0, and ISIC, Rev.3).
- Other minor amendments.

27. Although one has to take into consideration the priority of consolidating the present process of implementation of international standards, it is also true that both the experience of producers and users of tourism statistics at the national level and the processes of revision that are currently under way at the international level make it necessary to set up a mechanism by which individual countries and international organizations might formulate suggestions that would make it possible to evaluate, and at some point in time to initiate, a new process directed towards a third set of recommendations.

28. In this context, it is particularly relevant to mention the ongoing revision of ISIC, Rev.3 and CPC, Version 1.0. Both revisions have a direct influence on tourism statistics not only because of their direct relationship with the classifications of tourism characteristic products and activities, but also because of their relationship with the correspondence between CPC and the Extended Balance of Payments Services Classification (EBOPS). This is also the case for the revision of the fifth edition of the *Balance of Payments Manual* regarding the definition of *residence*, which affects the coverage of the *travel* item, as well as of *inbound tourism consumption* and *outbound tourism consumption*. No revision of REC93 and REC00 could be considered in isolation from those processes.

29. Looking into the future, the starting point of any process aimed at collecting proposals of updating should refer to the present conceptual framework of both sets of international standards and take the form of an open list of different issues based on the typology already developed by the Statistical Commission when proposing a

continuous updating mechanism of the 1993 SNA with the relevant adaptation to tourism statistics.

30. The World Tourism Organization presents to the Statistical Commission for consideration, a typology of classes of updates and revisions that would offer, in its opinion, the best approach to characterizing potential updates in order to sustain the relevance of the present conceptual framework of tourism statistics:

(a) Amendments that do not require major changes to key concepts, or data-collection and compilation systems, such as:

(i) Editorial amendments: pertaining to wording errors, and apparent contradictions, as well as translation errors that affect neither core concepts nor the structure of the system;

(ii) Clarification beyond dispute: pertaining to cases where an unambiguous clarification can be made;

(iii) Interpretation: referring to cases where a new situation arises for which the treatment in existing recommendations may not be clear;

(b) Changes to the basic conceptual framework, requiring changes in key concepts, that would impact data collection, compilation processes and analytical results. In these instances, suggested changes should be proposed on a case-by-case basis, including a precise justification, a discussion of the possible timing of the introduction of the identified change, the link with available comparable data across countries, and the consistency with other macroeconomic statistics frameworks. In all cases, such major suggested changes should be based on statistical experience and evidence.

31. Specifically, the World Tourism Organization understands that the updating process should, as a general requirement:

(a) Focus on a number of specific issues related to the conceptual framework of REC93 and REC00;

(b) Address users' needs (that is to say, quality elements related to these issues);

(c) Take into account the feasibility or adequacy of the suggested changes.

32. Provided that the Statistical Commission supports the above-mentioned basis guidelines, the World Tourism Organization proposes to launch and coordinate the current updating process in a three-phased initiative:

- Phase I: The World Tourism Organization would communicate this initiative to all countries (whether or not World Tourism Organization member States) and collect from them information on those issues that they considered to be in need of some sort of update. This process would be developed via e-mail and using a formalized questionnaire to be addressed to national tourism administrations, national statistical offices and central banks. This phase should be finalized by April 2005.

- Phase II: Once this information was collected and processed, the World Tourism Organization would distribute it to those international organizations and institutions with responsibility and experience (either as producers or users) in the field of tourism-related statistics and tourism analysis, in order

that they might collect, should they consider it appropriate, new proposals and suggestions from members and also from units in the organizations with competence in areas related to tourism statistics, national accounts, balance of payments and classifications. This phase should be initiated during the first quarter of 2005, and finalized in the course of the last quarter of 2005.

- Phase III: Based on the outcomes of phases I and II, the World Tourism Organization would prepare a detailed project document describing the contents of the proposed initiative for updating the present conceptual framework of tourism statistics, including its agenda, work programme, timetable, resource implications and decision-making process, and would present it to the Statistical Commission at its 2007 session.

33. Throughout this process, the World Tourism Organization will ask the advice and support of its Committee on Statistics and Macroeconomic Analysis of Tourism (see annex for the composition of the Committee) in the design and completion of phases I and III, as well as in the discussion of the final document to be presented to the Statistical Commission; also, it will extend invitations to non-members countries, organizations and institutions to participate in its meetings and initiatives throughout this process, in order to enlarge the perspective of both producers and users.

34. Lastly, the Committee will determine, according to the number and type of suggestions received in phases I and II, whether it is relevant to create a temporary working group of the appropriate parties that would strive to solve any particular problem. If this should be the case, the World Tourism Organization would ask the Statistical Commission to postpone the presentation of the final report initially planned for the Commission's 2007 session.

B. Other planned initiatives

35. The World Tourism Organization also presents to the Statistical Commission for its consideration the following initiatives in relation to the different fields mentioned throughout this report:

In the field of standard setting:

36. The World Tourism Organization intends to proceed further in deepening the relationship between the tourism satellite account and the 1993 SNA of which it is a satellite. In that connection, the World Tourism Organization plans to pursue its current consultations with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) regarding overlapping topics.

In the field of the promotion of the implementation of standards:

37. The World Tourism Organization intends to pursue its efforts to provide countries with extended guidelines on improving their statistical basis for setting up a tourism satellite account. This will be achieved by:

- Increasing the review of country experience and finding means to improve communication.

- Improving the direct sharing of experiences across countries with similar conditions.

In this connection, the World Tourism Organization considers that it would be important for those countries that have developed tourism satellite account exercises to share their experiences with other countries that are starting that process. It is understood that, in order to avoid overloading the responsible units (usually based in the national accounts departments of the national statistical offices) with new demands, this eventual collaboration should be limited to a reasonable number of issues and requested according to an agreed calendar.

In the field of the international comparability of tourism statistics disseminated through the World Tourism Organization:

38. Although this has been carried out with some delay within the context of the work developed by IMF, OECD, Eurostat and others, the World Tourism Organization has nonetheless achieved an ambitious task in adapting to the field of tourism statistics, the international guidelines for the presentation of statistical data and metadata promoted by those organizations.

39. In view of the fact that the level of development and consolidation of tourism statistics is very different from the level of development and consolidation in other areas of economic statistics, this work of adaptation has been presented at the eight subregional workshops on tourism statistics and the elaboration of a tourism satellite account carried out throughout 2003, with the objective of explaining the importance of documenting the sources of information that are being used for tourism statistics, and how the tourism variables are being observed. This format has induced countries to develop a more systematic and comprehensive approach to their statistical sources. They have been encouraged to use it within the process of evaluating the information that is available for the setting up of their system of tourism statistics, and as a basis for compiling a tourism satellite account.

Notes

[1] The agreement between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/232 of 23 December 2003, as set forth in the annex thereto. The text of article 13 is as follows:

"Article 13

"Statistical services

"1. The United Nations and the World Tourism Organization agree to strive for the maximum cooperation, the elimination of all undesirable duplication between them and the most efficient use of personnel in their respective collection, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical information. They agree to combine their efforts to secure the greatest possible usefulness and utilization of statistical information to guarantee close coordination in their respective statistical-related initiatives and to minimize the burden placed upon Governments and other organizations from which such information may be collected.

"2. The World Tourism Organization recognizes that the United Nations is the central agency for the collection, analysis, publication, standardization and improvement of tourism statistics serving the general purposes of international organizations.

"3. The United Nations recognizes the World Tourism Organization as the appropriate organization to collect, to analyse, to publish, to standardize and to improve the statistics on tourism, and to promote the integration of these statistics within the sphere of the United Nations system."

[2] Commission of the European Communities, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, United Nations and World Bank, *System of National Accounts, 1993* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.4).

[3] Statistical Papers, No. 62 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.XVII.6).

[4] Ibid., No. 83 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.6).

[5] Ibid., parts one and two.

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 6* (E/1993/26), para. 154 (a).

[7] Statistical Papers, No. 80 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.XVII.9).

[8] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24), para. 18 (a).

[9] Washington, D.C., IMF, 1993.

[10] These lists of activities and products have to be kept in line with the outcome of the revision of ISIC, Rev.3, and CPC, version 1.0, scheduled for 2007 by the Statistical Commission.

[11] Statistical Papers, No. 4, Rev.3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XVII.11).

[12] Ibid., No. 77, Ver. 1.0 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.5).

[13] The concept of *usual environment* is introduced in REC93, part one, chap. III, para. 22, as follows:

"The main purpose of introducing the concept 'usual environment' is to exclude from the concept of 'visitor' persons commuting every day or week between their home and place of work or study, or other places frequently visited. The definition of *usual environment* is therefore based on the following criteria:

"(a) Minimum distance travelled to consider a person a visitor;

"(b) Minimum duration of absence from usual place of residence;

"(c) Minimum change between localities or administrative territories."

Annex

Composition of the Committee on Statistics and Macroeconomic Analysis of Tourism

Officers

Chairman: France

Vice-Chairmen: Canada,* Spain*

Members

Cuba, Egypt, Israel, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Sri Lanka

Representative of the associate members

Aruba

Representatives of the affiliate members

Centro Internazionale di Studi sull'Economia Turistica (CISET), International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH & RA), MasterCard International

Observers

Non-member States

Australia, Singapore, Sweden, United States of America

Institutions

Eurostat, International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Ufficio Italiano dei Cambi, World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)

* Ex officio members.